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LONGFORM INVESTIGATION
Common Ground
Rampe '24 offers an inside look into the nature of the program and its reception on campus. **pages 5-7**

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Del Water Gap
On April 11, CAB hosted the indie-pop star for its final acousitc concert of the year. **page 13**

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The Spectator

Thursday, April 14, 2022

Volume LXIII
Number XXIII

Publishing the Truth, From Good Motives and For Justifiable Ends

COVID-19 update and interview with Karen Leach, COVID-19 Task Force Chair

by Deanna Durben '25
NEWS EDITOR

As of Wednesday, April 13, there are 189 active student cases, up from 103 last week. The whole of Oneida County currently has 718 active COVID-19 cases, of which 26.3% are Hamilton students.

Testing from Monday, April 11 returned 77 positive results out of 1403 tests, a positivity rate of 5.49%. The College has had a total of 541 student cases since January, meaning that over a quarter of students have contracted COVID-19 this semester.

On Wednesday, April 13, the COVID-19 Task Force stated, "Effective Friday, indoor events with food will not be allowed until further notice." Outdoor events are allowed to proceed, and the College urges students to take advantage of the Adirondack chairs and canopies, including the rebuilt Dunham Green tent. The email also reiterated that masks are now required indoors. Students are allowed to unmask in residence halls "unless maintenance staff are present".

The spike in cases has led to many questions from students and faculty about the future of campus regulations. The mask mandate, off-campus accomodation and class locations all come under questioning. Below is an interview with Chair of the COVID-19 Task Force, and Vice President for Administration and Finance, Karen Leach.

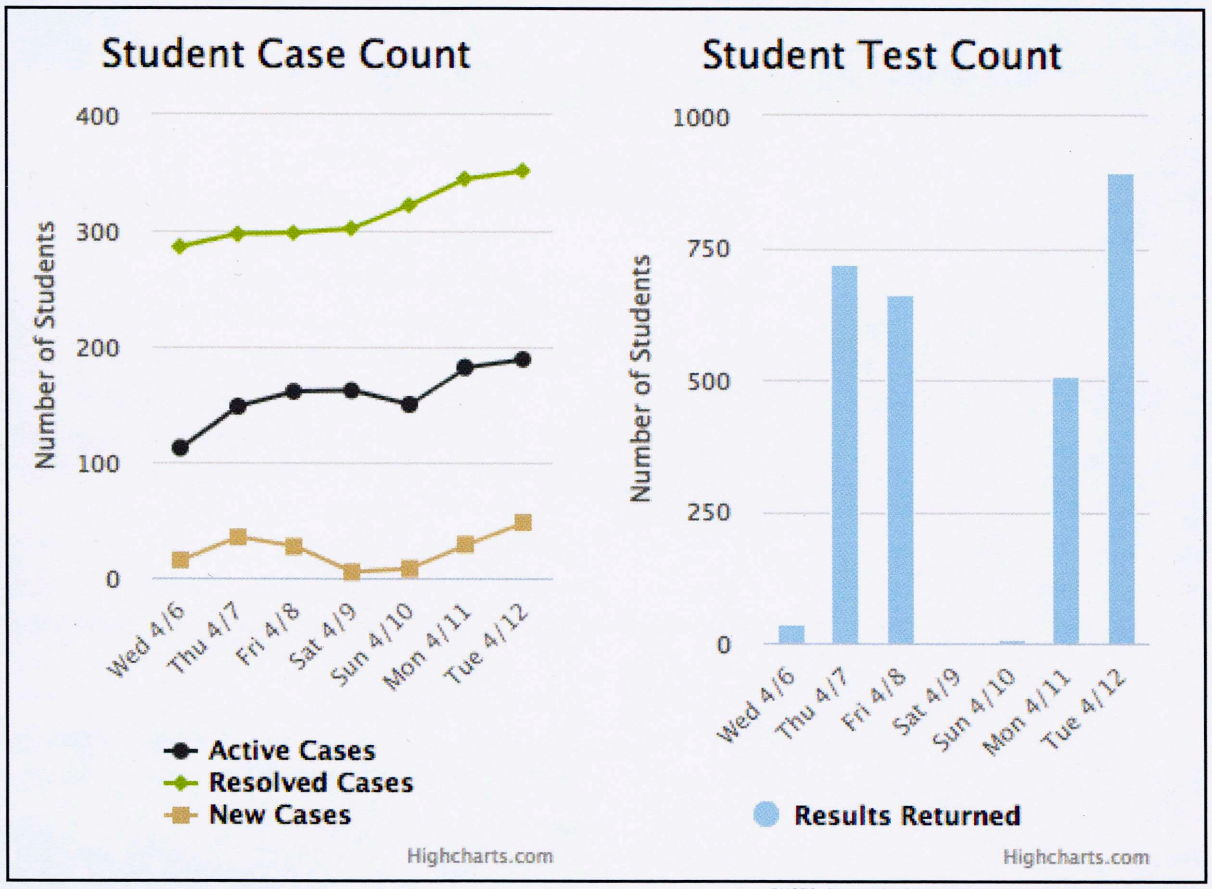

PHOTO COURTESY OF HAMILTON COLLEGE COVID-19 DASHBOARD

The most recent data available displays a record-high number of COVID-19 cases in students.

Is there a high chance of us going into Yellow status? (Are there specific criteria for going into Yellow? What positivity rate? The guidelines on the operating status grid from the beginning of this semester are understandably vague).

We can't really predict if we will have a change in status. Many factors go into the decision including what is happening on campus, in the region, and nationally.

Currently, is there a possibility of the classes at Hamilton College going virtual?

We have no plans to shut down the campus as we did in Spring 2020. Yellow status, if we went there, would allow professors to choose in person, hybrid, or remote classes. But, we hope we don't need to do that and we can finish out the semester with in-person classes.

Should students take a rapid test if they are a close contact, and do positive rapid tests immediately trigger the quarantine process and count them as a case?

Students who are close contacts should immediately wear a mask and take a rapid test on day four or five after exposure. It takes time for the virus to grow. If they develop symptoms sooner, they should call the Health Center for a test or take a rapid test and report it to the Health Center if it is positive. Yes, students who report a positive rapid test to the Health Center will be moved to isolation and are counted as a case.

Are all students currently quarantined off-campus? Will the College switch to in-room isolation as cases increase?

Yes, all students currently in isolation are off campus, either in the hotels or they have gone home if they live in driving distance and have transportation. We have a plan for in-room isolation but we hope we don't have to use it.

Story continued on page 2

What steps can the College take to mitigate spread beyond mandating masks? Is it possible for the College to enforce social distancing in classrooms, for example?

There is no evidence of classroom spread. Transmission appears to be coming from out of class activities. Everyone can help stop the spread by wearing a mask as much as possible and avoiding unmasked events.

How is the COVID-19 task force organized? Do all members attend regular meetings, or are there smaller subgroups?

There are 16 members on the Task Force including people who organize the testing, hotels and medical response. There are also members from student life, academic affairs, facilities management, human resources and two faculty members from science. We currently have three students on the Taskforce and during the past two years at least eight different students have been on the group. There is also a Steering Committee and several action groups. The Taskforce meets once a week and the Steering Committee meets twice a week if needed.

How much are the student representatives involved in the decision making process?

Student reps regularly and frequently provide input on a change we may make or a new policy we may implement. Like other members of the Task Force, they have great insights and always engage in a good debate of the pros and cons. Their insights and opinions are invaluable.

In hindsight, does the task force regret not mandating masks when students returned from spring break?

It's always easy to second-guess a decision in hindsight. Cases on campus were declining prior to the break. We provided rapid tests to students to use prior to their return. Many other schools brought their students back from break without a spike in cases. It's unfortunate that we did not have the same experience. Some of those schools experienced surges earlier in the semester and we are following the path that they did to eventually get to lower case counts.

Leach concluded the interview by noting that "another thing to remember is that everybody is vaccinated now. That was not the case in the spring of 2020!"

The COVID-19 Task Force will meet on Tuesday, April 19, to evaluate whether further changes in current COVID policies are needed. If the College were to go into Yellow status, this would mean a big shift in daily practices, with similar regulations as those students faced in the 2020-2021 school year.

Testing would increase to three times a week, with masks mandated in both indoor spaces and outdoors within six feet of others. Dining would shift to take-out, with reduced interaction. Athletic practices and competitions would likely be suspended. More information about each status can be found on the Campus Operating Grid on the COVID-19 Dashboard.

Currently, Hamilton College strictly enforces a biweekly testing policy on Mondays and Thursdays, meaning that positive cases are caught relatively quickly. Students are penalized with two disciplinary points if they miss a COVID test and do not make it up at the next available opportunity, surpassing the sanctions for underage students breaking the law by possessing alcohol or marijuana. Receiving six disciplinary points puts a student on disciplinary probation and impacts their housing lottery placement.

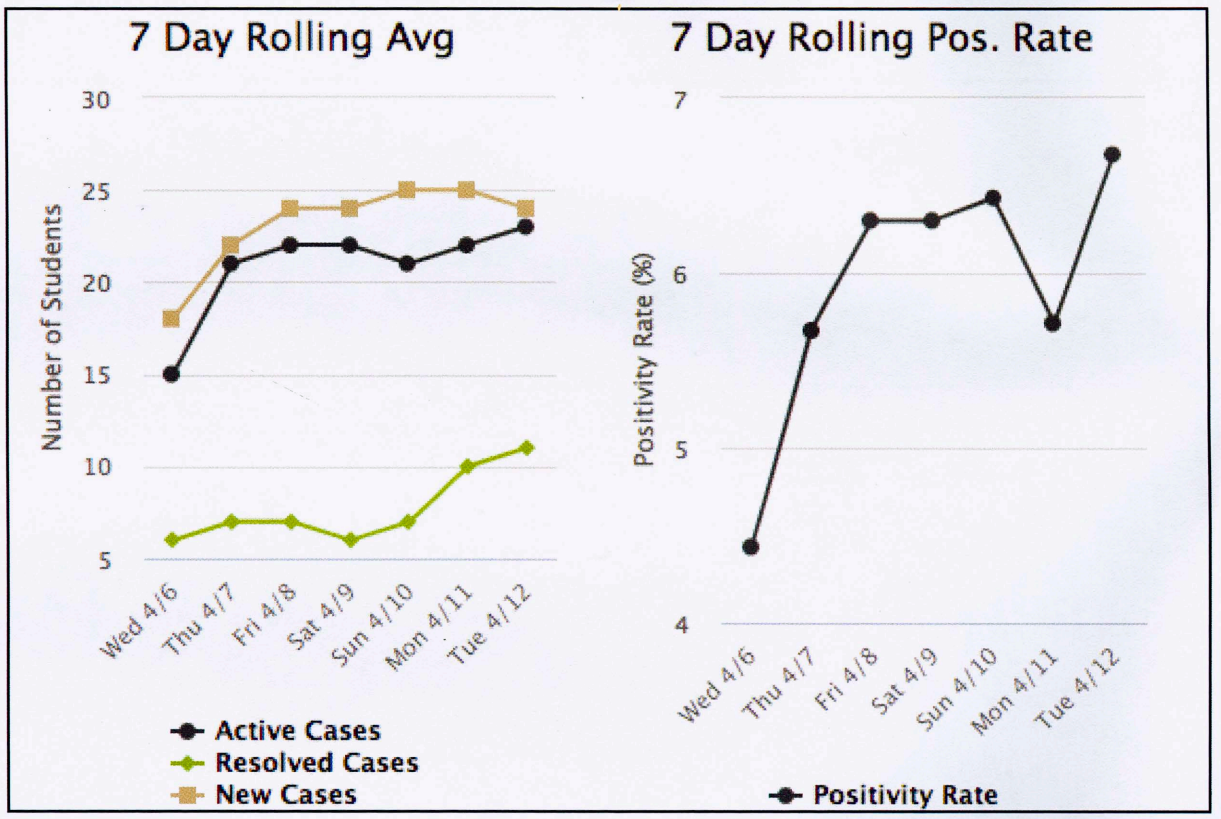

PHOTO COURTESY OF HAMILTON COLLEGE COVID-19 DASHBOARD

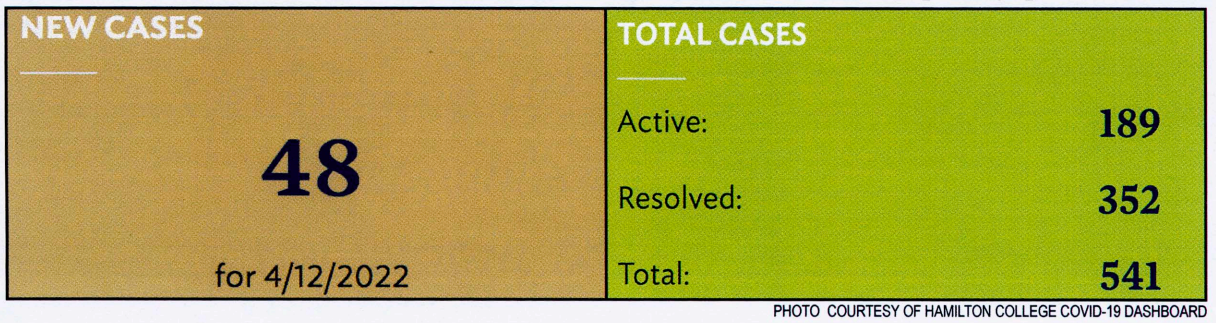

PHOTO COURTESY OF HAMILTON COLLEGE COVID-19 DASHBOARD

However, other schools' more relaxed testing requirements mean that cases may be severely underreported, making comparison difficult. For instance, Colgate University does not require vaccinated students to take any COVID-19 tests, stating on their website: "At this time, if you are not having symptoms and are not a close contact, no testing is necessary." This means that many asymptomatic cases likely go undetected, especially with the BA.2 variant.

Comparing Hamilton's COVID-19 cases this semester (541 total, 189 active) with our NESCAC peers that have similar testing requirements and enrollment may provide a more accurate comparison.

Bates College and Bowdoin College both have mandatory testing twice a week. Bates had 339 total cases this semester, and currently has 24 active student cases. Bowdoin had 340 total cases, with 103 currently active.

Colby College has had 361 total cases this semester, with 19 active student cases. Like Hamilton, Colby is administering PCR tests via the Broad Institute, and has processed 59,518 tests this semester.

Williams College has had 553 total cases, with 19 currently active. Their current mask mandate is similar to Hamilton's Blue Status one, with masks mandatory in classes, COVID-19 testing sites and the Health Center, but optional in most indoor spaces.

The most recent email sent by the COVID-19 Task Force urges students to "adhere to our safety protocols, think of others, and do the things we have all learned help keep us safe," ending with the message, "Stay positive, and let's all... work together to finish the semester strong."

April 14, 2022

Students join Kirkland Democrats at "Protest for Ukraine and Democracy"

by Nikki Greenberg '25
NEWS CONTRIBUTOR

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE KIRKLAND DEMOCRATS' FACEBOOK

On Friday, April 8, Hamilton students and professors joined members of the local Clinton community at the "Protest for Ukraine and Democracy". The Kirkland Democrats, a local organization that works "towards legislation based on progressive moral values, in our local community, state, and nation" planned and organized the rally. In the past, the organization coordinated similar events for Black Lives Matter and environmental causes.

The Hamilton chapter of the Young Democratic Socialists of America (YDSA) sent an email to the Hamilton Community regarding the protest on Thursday, April 7. The email encouraged students to "bring posters, signs, flags, & honk your car horn in support of Ukraine and Democracy."

Vesa Miftari '24, co-chair of YDSA, and Jack Diligent '23, Communications Liaison of YDSA, explained that Vige Barrie, Hamilton College Director of Media Relations, notified the YDSA of the protest because they hosted the "Candles for Ukraine" vigil on Thursday, March 3.

The event took place on the Clinton Village Green and around 30 people attended. Attendees gathered with signs and flags, shared information about their efforts to help the Ukrainian people and honked their horns as they drove by.

Diligent noted that members of the Ukrainian Catholic Church of St. Volodymyr the Great attended the rally. The church has been raising money by selling pierogi. They plan to use this money to help the people of Ukraine. According to the pastor of the church, they have raised $40,000. They will be taking a break for two weeks during Easter, but YDSA hopes to volunteer with them afterwards to help in their efforts.

Students also spoke to people with personal connections to the war. One attendee's brother is currently in Ukraine, and YDSA members talked to him about his and his brothers' experiences in Ukraine.

Miftari reflected that "it was a really great event. The Kirkland Democrats were grateful for our support, and we also want to express that we're grateful to them for taking the initiative to host the event and to everyone else who attempted to help out during the crisis."

Diligent added "it was nice to see a bunch of other people who care about this thing that we also care about and to make connections to other ways we can possibly help more in the future."

When asked about YDSA's involvement with Friday's protest and general focus on the war in Ukraine, Miftari answered, "a major part of YDSA is anti-imperialism, sovereignty…people having their own rights considered and focusing on the will of the people instead of the will of the elites, especially in Russia…and especially in Ukraine where a lot of their democratic rights and their sovereignty is being threatened. As YDSA, it is our obligation to do what we can to ensure that not just for people in America, but worldwide."

YDSA is currently planning to put together a newsletter with various ways for students to help with the Ukraine-Russia crisis. Furthermore, the organization is looking into ways for college students to volunteer their time to help Ukrainian refugees practice English online. They are also working with professors to find ways for students to speak with Ukrainian people and act as a support system during these times. In the future, YDSA plans to hold Ukrainian movie screenings and other events to recognize the culture of Ukraine and support organizations through donations.

Protest for Ukraine & Democracy
Friday / April 8th / 4pm / Clinton Village Green
#StandWithUkraine
For Peace & Freedom
Bring your own posters, signs, flags, & honk your car horn in support of peace for Ukraine & Democracy.
Sponsored by: www.KirklandDemocrats.org
www.cidi.org/disaster-responses/Ukraine-crisis/

PHOTO COURTESY OF YSDA

Content Warning: Contains mentions of gun violence.

Dear Members of the Hamilton Community,

On Tuesday, April 12, 29 people were injured in a shooting on a moving N-train in Brooklyn, New York. Among those injured, 10 were shot, five of whom were students commuting to school. Everyone deserves to feel safe in their community, and we at *The Spectator* extend our sincerest support to our peers who consider New York City their home.

On a different note, the Hamilton community has reached 189 active COVID-19 cases, a record for the College. We know it is difficult to revert to previous policies, especially those that limit some of the freedoms we have enjoyed this semester. However, we are almost at the end of the school year, and there are so many wonderful things to look forward to if we remain careful and thoughtful as a community in our response to the reinstatement of old policies.

Hang in there: tents are up, Food Trucks are out and about, and the sun teases us with its occasional (yet desperately needed) doses of Vitamin D.

Best,

Eric and Emma Mae

The Spectator

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Celebrating 175 years, we were first published as The Radiator *in 1847.*

The Spectator's Letter to the Editor section is designed to be a forum for the entire Hamilton community to discuss and debate campus, local, national, and global issues. Pieces published in the section express the opinion of the individual writers and are not necessarily the opinions of *The Spectator*, its editors or the Media Board.

Letters to the Editor are welcome from all students, alumni/ae, faculty, friends of the college, and Hamilton community members.

The Spectator has the following policies for submission:

1. Submissions are due by 10:00 p.m. on the Monday before publication. The editors reserve the right to refuse any late submissions.
2. Letters should be no longer than 500 words. The editors reserve the right to cut off letters at 500 words.
3. Letters submitted anonymously will not be printed.
4. *The Spectator* reserves the right not to publish any letter it deems inappropriate for publication.
5. If a piece is determined to be libelous, an unwarranted invasion of privacy, or an unnecessary and/or unwarranted ad hominem or personal attack, it will not be published.

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April 14, 2022

(Un)Common Ground: Program draws mixed reactions from Hamilton Community

by William (Will) Rampe '24
INVESTIGATIVE REPORTER

On Nov. 9, 2021, Hamilton College President David Wippman and Cornell University Thomas and Dorothy Litwin Professor of American Studies Glenn C. Altschuler published an opinion piece on the website *InsideHigherEd* titled "How Colleges Can Counter Cancel Culture." They argued that "constraints on discussions of important social issues, however sensitive, subvert the goals of a liberal arts education…Academic freedom means faculty members and students must be able to teach, learn about and advocate for unpopular positions and contrarian ideas, even if doing so makes some classmates and colleagues uncomfortable."

In a *New York Times* Letter to the Editor published on Nov. 25, 2021, President Wippman offered his solution to "cancel culture," stating "American colleges and universities remain committed to free speech and academic freedom, and many are working to address issues of political conformism through programs like Hamilton's Common Ground, which seek to model respectful discourse across political boundaries."

Several students and faculty voiced critiques of Common Ground in interviews with *The Spectator*, contesting some of the core principles undergirding the program's mission and expressing concern about the choice of speakers. Despite President Wippman's lauding of Common Ground, these interviews revealed a discrepancy between the program's intended effect and its outcomes in practice.

The Hamilton College website states that the mission of the Common Ground program is "for the speakers to model the kind of respectful dialogue across political boundaries that should occur not just on college campuses, but in the broader society as well." The Hamilton College website states that "Common Ground is supported by the Pohl family in honor of Hamilton graduates Arthur, Class of 1914, Harold, Class of 1915, Leland, Class of 1917, Harold '50, George '51, and David '54."

When asked about the funding of Common Ground, President Wippman responded that "we got a gift to fund the series. It's not endowed, but we do have some additional funds. I'm hoping to get an endowment to support it. I'd like to make sure it continues on an ongoing basis."

Common Ground's first event was on Oct. 18, 2017. It featured a debate between President Trump's former Deputy Chief of Staff Karl Rove and President Obama's Chief Campaign strategist David Axelrod on topics ranging from the role of media to populism.

Common Ground has since hosted five debates and a panel, with the most recent being a debate between Harvard Economics Professor N. Greg Mankiw and University of California, Berkeley Economics Professor Christina Romer about the consequences of income inequality. This event, which took place on Nov. 15, 2021, was delayed from its previous date of March 12, 2020 due to the complications surrounding hosting a debate during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In terms of campus responses to the first Common Ground event, President Wippman found that "the reactions I got were generally very positive. There are some people on campus who don't like the idea of the program. I'm not really sure what the logic behind that is."

PHOTO COURTESY OF HAMILTON COLLEGE

Hamilton College frames the Common Ground event as "a forum for respectful dialogue."

Assistant Professor of Anthropology Mariam Durrani opposes the program because "Hamilton students, faculty and staff who actually offer different perspectives from the status quo are targeted by white supremacists….So the question is common ground for whom? Who participates in common ground? Who is made to feel unwelcome by its very design? Who thinks it is respectful? Who doesn't?"

Initial Reactions

Although the first Common Ground debate occurred less than a year after the 2016 U.S. Presidential election, President Wippman claimed that no specific event led to the creation of the program. Instead, he explained that it started as a response to national polarization. "Nationally, there has been increasing political polarization, it's probably true at Hamilton as it is elsewhere. Common Ground was in part a response in an effort to encourage respectful dialogue across political boundary lines."

When asked whether he believes this polarization has fostered a cancel culture at Hamilton, President Wippman said "I do think, and I have heard, [that] many conservative students on campus…don't feel comfortable expressing their viewpoints openly for fear that they will be criticized for those viewpoints."

Melanie (Mel) Geller '22 shared her view regarding the issue of cancel culture. "I think cancel culture is bad because it's antithetical to restorative justice and incompatible with forgiveness, and I think as a community, we should prioritize those values over our instinct to condemn and ostracize," said Geller.

William (Will) Ling '22 finds it difficult to offer opposing viewpoints at Hamilton. "I think, for the most part, people here hold a more liberal view. I would say the people who broadcast dissenting views kind of loudly and have more controversial views definitely have caught flack, whether it's right or not."

After the April 11, 2019 Common Ground event featuring President Trump's former Chief of Staff Reince Priebus and former President Obama's Chief of Staff for Operations Jim Messina, Ling wrote an opinion piece for *The Spectator* titled "Protesting certain political speakers undermines the notion of 'common ground.'" Ling encouraged students to empathize with the positions of their peers and saw protests against Common Ground speakers as detrimental to the program's goals.

However, attempting to seek commonality between some political positions is exactly the issue Associate Professor of Africana Studies Nigel Westmaas has with Common Ground. In a Sept. 10, 2017 *Spectator* Letter to the Editor, Professor Westmass claimed "the principle and intent behind the planned series of talks might be well-intentioned. Dispassionate academic discourse has its place. In times like these, however, what we really need is passionate, consistent and spirited attack on racism and other forms and acts of intolerance and bigotry emanating from the White House. Too much is at stake for an elusive search for a fanciful, polite, common ground."

Professor Westmaas explained to *The Spectator* via email how Common Ground could be potentially harmful. He said that "there is the potential issue of 'false equivalence' that creeps into the common ground topics and/or conversations. So for example, in order to find a 'parallel' point or 'common ground' that suits 'both sides' we might equate 'both sides' with the level of 'complicity' on an issue far removed from the facts on the ground."

Thomas (Tommy) Keith '22 added to Professor Westmaas's perspective about the potential harm of Common Ground. "I was part of the College Democrats at the time, and a lot of the leadership [was] not super happy about [Common Ground] and [was] kind of boycotting it," said Keith.

He personally opposed the Common Ground program because "[the panelists are] participating in the system with so much dirty money, they have so much corrupt politics behind them. They have heinous policy positions on certain things. It is good to hear from a diverse array of perspectives, but when those perspectives are kind of disingenuous or kind of corrupted, that's when I have an issue."

To Keith and Westmaas, Common

Ground did not mend polarization. Rather, it revealed substantial issues with trying to create common ground when the moral standing of the speakers and views could be called into question.

Dean of Faculty Suzanne Keen acknowledged the need to counter hateful rhetoric and views Common Ground as a means to achieve this goal. Dean Keen said that "if somebody comes to campus who says something that offends you, strikes at the heart of everything that you hold dear and criticizes you in a completely unfair way because of some aspect of your identity, something like that would be offensive to anybody. In my opinion, the appropriate response to that is to stand up to that person or gather others around you and to assemble and say what you believe, as an alternative to what the idea is that they're offering."

President Wippman feels more so that general responses to the program have been overwhelmingly positive, noting that "people voted with their feet. We had large numbers of people attend pretty much all the Common Ground programs…we filled the [Margaret Bundy Scott] Field House for the program with Condoleezza Rice and Susan Rice."

Does Common Ground generate discussion on campus?

When *The Spectator* asked President Wippman whether the Common Ground program fosters discussion on campus, he responded "I think so, and that's certainly the goal of the program. The most recent program was about the causes, consequences and policy choices related to income inequality, and I know there was discussion about that across campus. My hope is that it will stimulate discussion of these issues."

When *The Spectator* asked Dean Keen the same question, her response contrasted President Wippman's. "I don't think that it really has had that impact. I think it tends to be a discrete event. I haven't noticed there being continued discussion, for example, about income inequality after the event. It seems like it's more like that's the event, and you go and it's interesting and enjoyable. Maybe the student paper runs an account of it? Maybe you see a few things on Facebook about it? But I haven't noticed that."

When *The Spectator* asked students this question, they tended to agree more with Dean Keen's perspective regarding Common Ground than President Wippman's opinion.

Edward (Eddie) Gamble '25 found that conversations on Common Ground were more reactionary than sustained. Ling shared this perspective. "I wasn't necessarily like talking to my friends about the issues that were brought up. Again, campus does stray pretty far to the left, so I don't think that there's much discourse afterward between opposing viewpoints. I think, for the most part, people already have a more set view," said Ling.

While Keith agreed that Common Ground did not facilitate debate around the issues presented after the event, he offered a different perspective regarding how students view the event and its consequences. He stated "I think it's done a good job facilitating debate around how broken our economic system is and how the school is trying to force-feed an ideology that we can all get along in politics. [How] can we all respect each other's viewpoints when their perspectives might be actively harming certain people? I think students through [Common Ground] have been exposed to more bullshit and been able to counteract it rather than actually gaining fruitful perspectives from other people."

> ***"[How] can we all respect each other's viewpoints when their perspectives might be actively harming certain people?"***
> ***- Tommy Keith '22***

Professor Durrani shares Keith's view that Common Ground events showcase the error in trying to generate commonality around certain issues. She argued that "[Common Ground] type events show how the ignorances held by so many about the legacies of settler colonialism, the transatlantic slave trade and US imperialism around the world continue to shape Hamilton College cultures and discourses to this very day, and importantly exact a cost from those of us stubborn enough to commit to anti-racism in scholarship AND in our everyday practice (this latter part is not common at all)."

When asked how he would respond to someone who claimed the Common Ground program was bringing views that are harmful to campus, President Wippman said "I'd want to have a conversation with them and try to understand which specific views were articulated that they found harmful and whether there's a basis for that. I'd like to understand what they mean by harmful. We have to be careful about the language of harm, so if a student said that, I'd want to understand what is it about the views that you found harmful and how can we deal with that."

Common Ground and Student Input

The Common Ground program has mostly featured former White House officials whose work concentrates on politics, international affairs or economics. President Wippman explained the selection process, saying "sometimes we work with the speakers' bureau, sometimes we work with faculty, as we did with the recent program on income inequality. I certainly welcome student input. At one point, we circulated an announcement saying if people wanted to organize programs, we would provide funding for them. We only got one proposal, which I think came from the Levitt Center."

Student interviewees said they desired a larger role in Common Ground, and that they felt the program was at its best when the speakers talked about issues directly related to student interests.

Gamble wrote an opinion piece for *The Spectator* where he outlined the debate between Romer and Mankiw and gave his thoughts on both of their economic solutions to inequality. When *The Spectator* asked him whether he thought the debate between Romer and Mankiw gave enough opportunities for student input, Gamble responded "I guess so, I think maybe just a bit more [would be better]." He found that it was the student questions that sparked discussion on more pertinent topics.

"I got the feeling that in the first Common Ground events [I went to], there wasn't a lot of time for student input and that a lot of the questioning was, you know, fairly obvious critiques of the right-wing people on the stage. [Critiquing these figures] is important because I think those people should be challenged. I think all viewpoints should be challenged. But I don't know if I learned much more from that," said Keith.

Ling recognized difficulties with having debates that involved too much student input. However, he explained that this problem can be mitigated by having Common Ground events that feature panels rather than two prominent speakers. He stated "during the affirmative action [panel] anyone who wanted to ask a question could ask [a] question. So it was a lot more intimate. So I think sometimes it's good to have the bigger name speakers, but it can in some sense be a detriment to just how much input students [have] and how many questions students can [ask]."

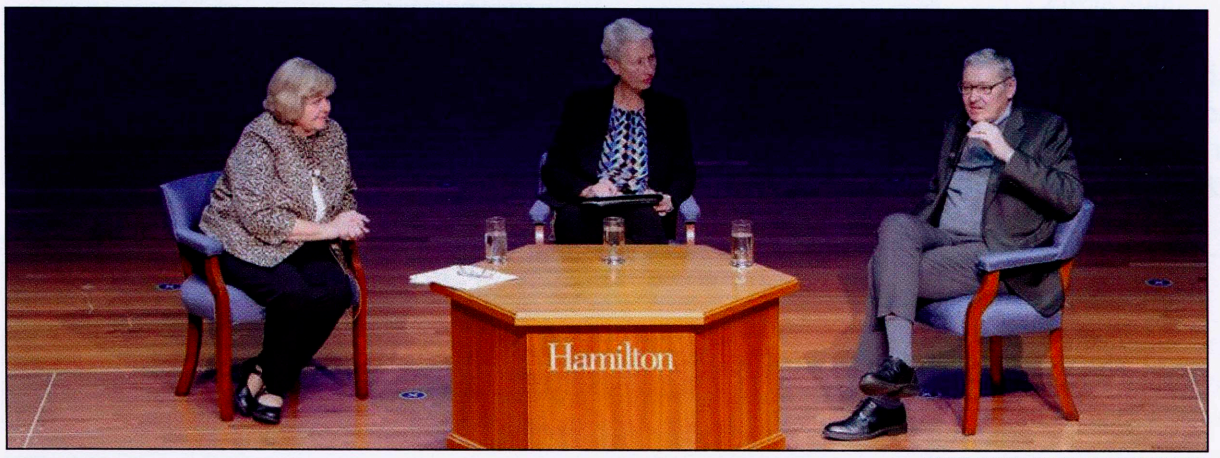


PHOTO COURTESY OF HAMILTON COLLEGE

UC Berkeley Economics Professor Christina Romer (left) and Harvard Economics Professor Greg Mankiw (right) were the panelists at the Fall 2021 Common Ground event.

When Ling spoke on the affirmative action panel, he was referring to the Jan. 29, 2020 Common Ground event on the pros and cons of affirmative action. It featured Stanford Law School Professor Rick Banks, Associate Professor of Education at the University of Maryland Julie Park, Senior Fellow at the Manhattan Institute Jason Riley and Counsel for the Educational Opportunities Project of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Genevieve Bonadies Torres.

An article titled "Common Ground panelists discuss the pros and cons of affirmative action" written by Amanda Kim '21 in *The Spectator* explains the degree of audience involvement in the discussion. She stated, "[Moderator and Associate Dean for Strategic Academic Initiatives at Harvard University Julie] Vultaggio then began the program by asking for audience input, encouraging attendees—as well as those watching the live stream—to anonymously submit the words that they associated with the concept of affirmative action. Using the service Poll Everywhere, Vultaggio then displayed a word cloud comprised of the submitted terms."

"I think students should have greater input in the event topic and selection of speakers."
- Melanie Geller '22

"I think that knowing who would be coming and kind of having student input is good in all cases because students are interested in [and] might want certain people here. I think the College could do a better job," said Ling.

Geller offered her own solution for increasing student input in the decision-making process. "I like that the events incorporate some student questions, but I think students should have greater input in the event topic and selection of speakers. I think one solution could be if the faculty or administration listed a couple of different topics and allowed students to rank the topics in their order of preference," said Geller.

"If you want to do something for Common Ground, I think that it's pretty important that it should be what the students want," said Gamble.

Issues with Speakers' Backgrounds

The level of student input is not the only concern that interviewees had regarding Common Ground speakers. Professor Durrani felt that the debate about income inequality did not give sufficient credence to minority voices. Professor Durrani asked in an email "Why did we have three white 'boomers' discussing income inequality and not any Black or Indigenous scholars or activists? I found it terribly revealing that the first major [Common Ground] event after 2020—when George Floyd's state execution at the hands of a police officer set off the largest social movement in US history and a summer of Black Lives Matter protests around the world—had not one Black person on stage to actually talk about how income inequality is linked to systemic racism in housing, healthcare, education, infrastructure, etc."

Keith also had issues with the background of the speakers, stating "[Romer and Mankiw] were both fundamentally capitalists and have benefited from the neoliberal system and neoliberal academia. They definitely disagree on the margins of how to solve inequality, but I think a lot of their logic was framed around incentives and framed around monetary rewards for people rather than a moral imperative that inequality is not okay. I think it would be a lot cooler if they got a more diverse array of perspectives than just two establishment perspectives that are both out of touch with what people want. Like bringing on a leftist and anarchists and a hardcore libertarian."

Henry Platt Bristol Professor of Economics Ann Owen noted "[Common Ground] brought in two prominent scholars in economics who also had valuable experience as policymakers. I think that the students benefited from hearing their perspectives on policy aimed at reducing inequality."

Common Ground on the Ground

In Sept. 2019, President Wippman announced that the Common Ground program was expanding and had gained supplemental funding for a new program called "Common Ground on the Ground."

According to President Wippman, the purpose of Common Ground on the Ground was to "stimulate discussion of pressing social issues across a wide range of subject areas, including economics, history, literature, the arts, philosophy, law, and politics." He also gave examples of programs that could receive funding as part of the program, such as "creating new student-led publications, podcasts, online broadcasts, or video content that present varying perspectives" and "creating new or redesigned courses and seminars that encourage open dialogue about polarizing issues, with guest speakers, simulations, and paired readings."

When asked which programs have received funding through Common Ground on the Ground, President Wippman stated "the Levitt Center created a program to train students to facilitate difficult conversations, and we supported that, but I think it got interrupted by the pandemic. There was an effort to expand out beyond the Common Ground program as it has operated so far. We wanted to get it into the broader community at Hamilton. For example, we worked with NPR's One Small Step program. They came to campus, paired students with members of the community and had conversations about how their political views formed." According to NPR, the One Small Step Program "explores the idea that intentional conversations between partisans could be a catalyst for national healing."

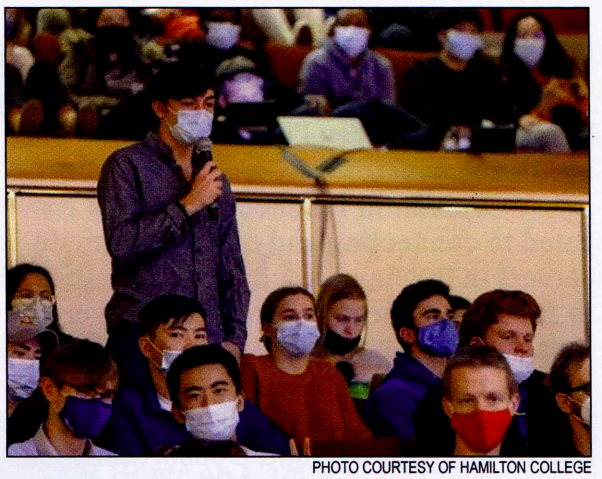


PHOTO COURTESY OF HAMILTON COLLEGE

Billy Marin '25 asks a question during the Fall 2021 Common Ground event.

Speakers' Perspectives

When asked about speakers' feedback on Common Ground, President Wippman responded that "the speakers generally have been very positive about their experience. They found Hamilton audiences engaging [and] the questions to be good ones. I think they've enjoyed the classroom visits a lot, the one I remember most vividly was Susan Rice and Condoleezza Rice." *The Spectator* reached out to former Common Ground speakers for comment but received no response.

What is next for Common Ground?

The Spectator asked students whether or not they believed the Common Ground program should continue. "Maybe a wider range of people could be helpful" said Ling.

Gamble agreed: "yeah, I think that the program should definitely continue. I think foreign policy or something focusing on a specific issue. Not all viewpoints can really be represented by just two people, so if you can get a more comprehensive view of the situation, it's a bit more interesting."

Keith had a different view. "I don't think the program should continue under its current guise of common grounds. As we've seen, it's not really possible in today's politics. Sure, they're trying to cultivate [common ground], but you have a party that's very obstructionist and actively harming our democracy in a lot of ways."

Professor Westmaas explained why finding common ground is difficult for some people on campus, despite the intentions of the program. He stated, "I invoked the example of Martin Luther King's radical philosophy and practice that was definitely not America's conception of "common ground" in 1968. It took about two decades for the halo to appear above his head. Now there are attempts to co-opt and normalize King who, just before his assassination, had a disapproval rating of 75% among Americans."

Regarding future programs, President Wippman commented "We're still talking about that. It's tricky to do large-scale programs during the pandemic... We don't have any specific speakers lined up at the moment, but we hope to resume those programs in the future."

Club Spotlight: Women in Finance

by Madeline (Maddie) Pittel '24
FEATURES EDITOR

Women in Finance (WIF) is a new club on campus dedicated to connecting and exposing female-identifying students to careers in financial services, economics and consulting. Founded in Jan. 2022, the club already has over sixty members and is the first of its kind on Hamilton campus in recent years. Catherine McFarland '22 and Sabrina Turner '24 are WIF's co-founders.

The idea came after McFarland and Turner, both alumnae of the Sapere Aude Consortium in 2020 and 2021 respectively, were discussing their experiences in the program. The Sapere Aude Consortium is a nonprofit research organization that provides internships for first generation college students and children of public servants to gain exposure to the financial services industry. It culminates in participants writing a research paper. Turner explained that the internship "is about six weeks long. They bring in professionals from different firms to come and talk about different career paths within finance to learn more about the industry broadly. Then, you work together with four other college students from universities across the country to write a research paper on a recent trend in the investment or wealth management industry."

McFarland, an Economics major, wrote a paper during the Summer 2020 titled "Women and Wealth: The Disconnect" that addressed the lack of women in wealth management. Turner, a Public Policy major, wrote a paper titled "ESG Investing: A Call for Standardization" that examines the topic of greenwashing. Through their research and networking, McFarland and Turner learned more about the lack of female representation in the financial services industry. In addition, Sapere Aude Consortium founder Joseph Craven is a huge advocate for women pursuing finance careers, and instilled the idea of "paying it forward" to program participants. With this in mind, Turner and McFarland decided to translate their positive experience to help other young women at Hamilton gain exposure to the industry.

The club has hit the ground running with multiple events connecting students to alumnae and peers. On Tuesday, April 12, the club co-sponsored a Women in Finance alumni panel with the Career Center Finance and Consulting Connect Team. Lisa Yang '17, Vice President at Citi Wealth Management; Meghan Grip '19, Analyst at Goldman Sachs; Ellie Riehle '20, Global Markets Analyst at Goldman Sachs and Julia McCusker '20, Analyst at KBW Investment Banking, shared their experience and advice to members over Zoom.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CATHERINE MCFARLAND '22

Members learned more about the Economic department's female professors' research and hobbies over snacks.

On Wednesday, April 13, WIF hosted an event to learn more about institutional equity sales from Lona Sniderman '19. The intention of these panels was to show Hamilton students what resources they have at their disposable, and to encourage usage of the network of Hamilton alumnae in finance. Turner noted that organizing an on-campus network for women is important to help them feel more comfortable amongst the established male-dominated networks.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CATHERINE MCFARLAND '22

Students learned more about the day-to-day lives of financial advisors at Northwestern Mutual in New Hartford, New York.

Even though one does not need to be an economics major to work in the financial sector, Turner points out that confidence in economic topics is helpful. Currently at Hamilton, as well as at most other academic institutions, women are underrepresented in economics departments. Thus, one of the club's current initiatives is to increase the number of women in Hamilton's Economics Department. The club's advisor, Economics Department Chair, Professor of Economics and Henry Platt Bristol Professor of Public Policy Ann Owen, explained that one of the reasons behind the smaller percentage of female economics majors is that women are much more easily discouraged by lower grades, especially in introductory courses. In response, Hamilton has made changes to try to retain more female concentrators such as maintaining gender balance among economics professors and introducing classes like Economics 166, for which the Economics Department received one of Insight into Diversity's 2021 Inspiring Program in STEM Awards. Recently, WIF partnered with the Economics Department to host a Women in Economics mixer in FoJo South with the goal of building connections amongst female students and female faculty in a more informal way. Over fifty female economics students attended this event. Turner wants to further this effort of retaining women in economics by creating study sessions through their clubs to allow students to support each other academically.

Even beyond academics, Turner remarked how intimidating finance was when she first began her internship because of excessive jargon and high expectations to know everything. However, she claimed that by sticking with the internship, one will start to understand more of what one hears. McFarland noted that she wished she understood how receptive and welcoming the Hamilton alumni network was sooner, particularly the female alumnae. She suggested that students reach out sooner rather than later because the best way to demystify the industry is to hear from people who work in it.

Next week, on April 18 at 7:00 p.m., WIF will be hosting a panel of their former mentors at Sapere Aude Consortium. They will provide members with a broad overview of the financial services industry and break down sectors like wealth management, investment banking and asset management. In addition, their mentors (three of which are women) will share more about their experiences in the industry and provide advice to students. McFarland suggested that "anyone who is interested should attend. It is a low-stakes way to learn more about finance, especially from some very successful women!"

McFarland and Turner hope that their foundation for WIF will thrive after they graduate this spring and study abroad during the 2022-2023 year respectively.

The Bachelors

Alex Szyperek '24

PHOTO COURTESY OF ALEX SZYPEREK '24

Name and year: Alex Szyperek '24.
Pronouns: he/him/his.
Hometown: Poland and NYC.
Home on Campus: South.
Major: Chemistry.
Turn on? Girls that don't go to Hamilton.
Turn off? *Spectator* readers, gotcha.
If you were a dorm which would you be and why? Skenandoa because try saying my last name.
If you had to describe yourself as the love child of any two musicians, who would you pick and why? Blxst with a little bit of Noah Kahan.
What's the best pick-up line you've ever used/had used on you? I think we have chemistry together.
What's your type? Hamilton College varsity goalies from Ohio that can scream at me in bed.
What are three things you cannot live without? Jax Namath Sattinger, Number 12 LHP on the Baseball team and Hannah Singer's boyfriend.
If you were any social space, what would it be? The Glenview common room circa 2020-2021.
Where do you go when you want to be alone? Second term Korean class at 9:00 a.m. on a Monday.
If you could join one group on campus, what would it be? The Hamilton College Varsity Women's Vollyball Team.
What's your Patronus and why? I would want to be any of the boys from South 202. They're all beasts, except SK '24.
What would you give a thumbs up? Freedom of Press and the editor-in-chief of *The Spectator*.
What would you give a thumbs down? Being an organic chemistry lab TA that actually helps the students.
Who would you say is your campus crush? Nice guy at diner who asks if I want fries.
Who would you say is your faculty crush? Everyone in the Chemistry department.
What would your perfect date be? Imagine you walk into a GVA function. You don't know anyone because you don't go to Hamilton. NC '24 and EM '24 are dominating the pong table because they move different. I say hi and ask if you want to play next. We're next. You shoot it and make it and so do I. We're elite, but this isn't any easy game. NC '24 bounces it and EM '24 forms a ring. They call ring of fire and make it. I look at you and you look at me. Do I feel chemistry? You tell me we should just do it and pull me in and kiss me. We continue and end up asking for I-95. It's neck and neck but we win. NC '24 reaches out his hand and says good game. You say thanks.
What is the weirdest thing currently in your room? Kuck.
If you could remake the points system, what would be the number one offense? Having a laundry bag with your name on it.
Favorite campus study spot? The William M. Bristol, Jr. Pool.
If you were a food, which would you be and why? Steamed carrots (explanation redacted).

Hanna Cillo '24

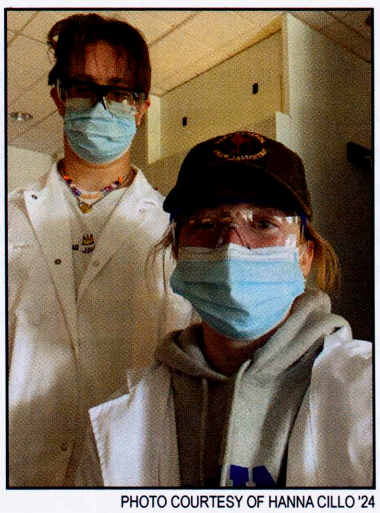


PHOTO COURTESY OF HANNA CILLO '24

Name and year: Hanna Cillo '24.
Pronouns: she/her/hers.
Hometown: Richmond, VA.
Home on Campus: McIntosh.
Major: Biology and Art.
Turn on? Commons sugar cookies.
Turn off? Commons lemon bars.
If you were a dorm which would you be and why? G Road because I like to be as far away from people as possible.
If you had to describe yourself as the love child of any two musicians, who would you pick and why? Cautious Clay and the Black Eyed Peas.
What advertising slogan best describes your life? Taste the rainbow.
What TV genre best describes you? Dark comedy.
What's the best pick-up line you've ever used/had used on you? "Do you peel all your bananas like that?"
What's your type? Women.
What are three things you cannot live without? Moisturizer, bandaids and Whey protein.
Where do you go when you want to be alone? Are we ever really alone?
If you could join one group on campus, what would it be? WHCL, oh wait.
What's your Patronus and why? That's so stupid, J.K. Rowling is transphobic.
What would you give a thumbs up? Clean Darkside kitchens.
What would you give a thumbs down? The five dirty spoons covered in butter next to the sink that have been there for months.
Who would you say is your campus crush? She lives on Darkside *wink wink*.
Who would you say is your faculty crush? Karen in KTSA, literally the sweetest person ever.
What would your perfect date be? Picnic and hiking.
What is the weirdest thing currently in your room? Kate Carman.
If you could remake the points system, what would be the #1 offense? Setting off the fire alarm at 4:00 a.m. on a Tuesday.
If you were a food, which would you be and why? Bacon mac and cheese.
Lights on or lights off? Spotlights only.
Favorite campus study spot? Kristin's office.
What was your first thought this morning? Kate, please shut up.
What's the meaning of life? Sorry, I'm a STEM major. I don't understand.
Which member of Disney royalty are you? Cinderella, because I'm broke but still down for a good time.
Which American historical figure are you attracted to and why? Amelia Earhart does things to me.

April 14, 2022

Why it is imperative that we all pay greater attention to global geography

by William (Will) Rampe '24
OPINION EDITOR

Most people have at least one friend who would consider themselves a political junkie. Many of these friends may be able to name the number of votes each state possesses in the electoral college or the political party of the last ten members of Congress from their home district. I have a lot of respect for people who can do that sort of thing. Knowing someone like that is important. I always enjoy talking to these types of people when election season comes around, and you want to learn information without devoting many hours out of your day following CNN's seemingly non-stop coverage. When it comes to world events, however, the knowledge they possess often comes up short. With all the big headlines surrounding world events, from the war in Ukraine to the election of a new Pakistani prime minister, possessing knowledge of world affairs has become increasingly crucial.

This gap in knowledge exists because of the hyper-focus many have on politics in the U.S. while disregarding what goes on around the world. I understand this lack of understanding of world politics. Many of these issues seem inexplicable when lacking context. Why would Russia, a nation with less than half the GDP per capita of the EU, provoke a war with Ukraine, knowing the severity of the sanctions placed

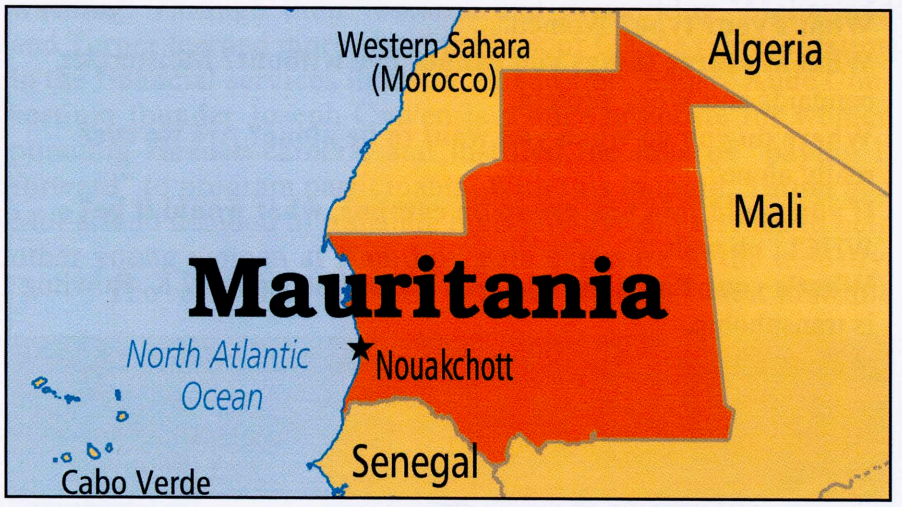


PHOTO COURTESY OF OPERATION WORLD

The north African nation of Mauritania is often confused with the island nation of Mauritius, found off the coast of Madagascar.

upon them in response? Why do coups seem so common in the countries in the Sahel region of Africa? While the answers to these questions could derive from any number of reasons, there is a simple area of knowledge that can be gained that helps us understand these conflicts: geography. It is no surprise to anyone that many Americans are absolutely abysmal at geography. After the killing of the Iranian general Qasem Solemani, surveys were taken to see how many Americans could locate Iran on a map. The results were underwhelming: only 23% of those surveyed could locate Iran on a world map, and that number only rose to 28% when the map was reduced to just the Middle East.

Now, you may be thinking that if you were chosen for this survey you would have been able to find Iran on a map without skipping a beat. If so, then congratulations! My message is not for you. For those who struggle to locate Iran on a map, I can only ask why. I understand not knowing the difference between Mauritania and Mauritius, or not being able to locate Bouvet Island. Iran, however, is a nation with 84 million people that is constantly in the news (mostly due to its alleged efforts to obtain nuclear weapons).

PHOTO COURTESY OF GEOLOGY.COM

The Mercator map, a staple of geography classes, distorts the size of countries to help sailors navigate around the world.

Russia is an easier country for many to locate due to its immense size on the Mercator map, but how much understanding of Russia does simply locating it on a map give us? I doubt many people could locate Crimea, or name any former Soviet states besides Ukraine. I name these particular regions/states in particular because that knowledge is relevant to understanding the context of the ongoing war in Ukraine. Without this knowledge, Putin's motives for restoring Russia to its (supposed) former greatness make no sense.

Knowing geography does not immediately come with an understanding of world affairs, but it certainly is a good first step. I recommend studying geography to anyone who is interested in international politics or just wants a better understanding of the world around them. Trust me, it makes everything make a lot more sense.

PHOTO COURTESY OF GOOGLE MAPS

The nation of Ukraine has recently suffered numerous military assaults by Russian forces from the north, south and east.

April 14, 2022

Sarah Palin and her overarching impact on our political landscape

by Patrick (Pat) Cleary '24
STAFF WRITER

It is Jan. 2016 in a heated barn on the Iowa State University campus. In a bitterly contested race for the Republican nomination, businessman Donald Trump has an ace up his sleeve to help him win the crucial Iowa caucus. That ace is former Alaska Governor Sarah Palin. She goes on stage, endorses the candidate and then points to the press box in the back: "Media heads are spinning," she exclaimed. "This is gonna be so much fun."

Five years later, on April 1, 2022, the now former governor Palin announced her candidacy for the lone Alaska seat in the House left open by the death of longtime representative Don Young. Two days later, she received the endorsement of former President Donald Trump. The endorsement belies Palin's preeminence; in her 13 years of activism since resigning as governor, she crafted the blueprint that precipitated the party's rightward slide into divisive culture war politics, culminating in the unlikely rise of our 45th president. To understand this phenomenon, though, we first need to go back before Palin was a power broker for Republicans or a punchline for Tina Fey, back to when she was just an obscure governor.

In 2008, veteran Arizona Senator John McCain was faced with the decision of selecting a running mate. In order to offset his image as an aging, insufficiently conservative Washington insider, he selected Palin, the young conservative outsider. Palin was anti-abortion and pro-oil drilling, and she would be present to appeal to the kinds of strident, outspoken conservatives that had always been wary of the more moderate McCain. McCain and Palin lost decisively to the Obama-Biden ticket.

However, what emerged from that defeated campaign was an infectious energy that propelled Palin to national prominence. Palin was beloved by conservative commentators and the radical wing of her party for her outspoken, unapologetic nature. On the campaign trail she spoke about the "real America" that existed in the patriotic small towns that formed her base. After her infamously poor and widely parodied interviews with Katie Couric, Palin supporters argued that she was the victim of a biased, elitist media, a press that cared little for the Americans who similarly came from humble backgrounds and small towns.

Palin became a political celebrity in the years after the 2008 campaign, writing books, becoming a TV star with shows on Fox News and TLC and raising money with her own political action committee SarahPAC. She put these skills to use in the 2010 midterms, becoming a key fixture in the right-wing Tea Party movement and frequently appearing as a keynote speaker at rallies. It was Palin who coined the term "death panels" to describe the hypothetical rationing of healthcare by bureaucrats under President Obama's healthcare reform. She also criticized Obama for a perceived lack of patriotism. In her book *America By Heart: Reflections on Family, Faith, and Flag*, she expressed her belief that "ordinary Americans are tired of Obama's global apology tour and of hearing about what a weak country America is from left-wing professors and journalists."

While these attacks might seem outlandish, they changed conversations within conservative circles and began to affect the political process at large. The hysteria over 'death panels' helped rally conservatives in 2010 to take back the House and begin their decade-long crusade to repeal the Affordable Care Act. Attacks on Obama's patriotism devolved into the birtherism movement. The moderate politics of John McCain were no more.

These movements illustrate a clear plan for modern American conservatism: go heavy on offense, attack the opposition with little evidence to control the media cycle and fan outrage within its own political base. Palin's strategy is based around targeting identity and patriotism. She talked most about the "real America," which coincidentally encompassed the regions that supported her the most, and questioned Barack Obama's patriotism and birth country. Palin does not have an in-depth knowledge of policy, at one point claiming that Alaska's close border with Russia endowed her with foreign policy wisdom. Instead, she pivots to culture war issues that she can use to fan outrage. These strategies are highly reminiscent of another, more recent politician.

It's hard to say that Palin was the sole influence on Donald Trump's style of politics, but acting as if the former president's divisiveness, shunting of conventions and attacks on the press are a new development ignores the events of the 2008 McCain ticket. Looking back, it appears almost predestined that someone would seize upon the plan bubbling up out of Wasilla, Alaska. The contemporary GOP focuses on inflaming tensions on topics from school curriculum to police funding to kneeling during football games. These topics neither create policy nor solve problems, but they do create firestorms of outrage. Who could have guessed that all it took was one small-state governor to light the first match? As Palin goes, so goes the nation.

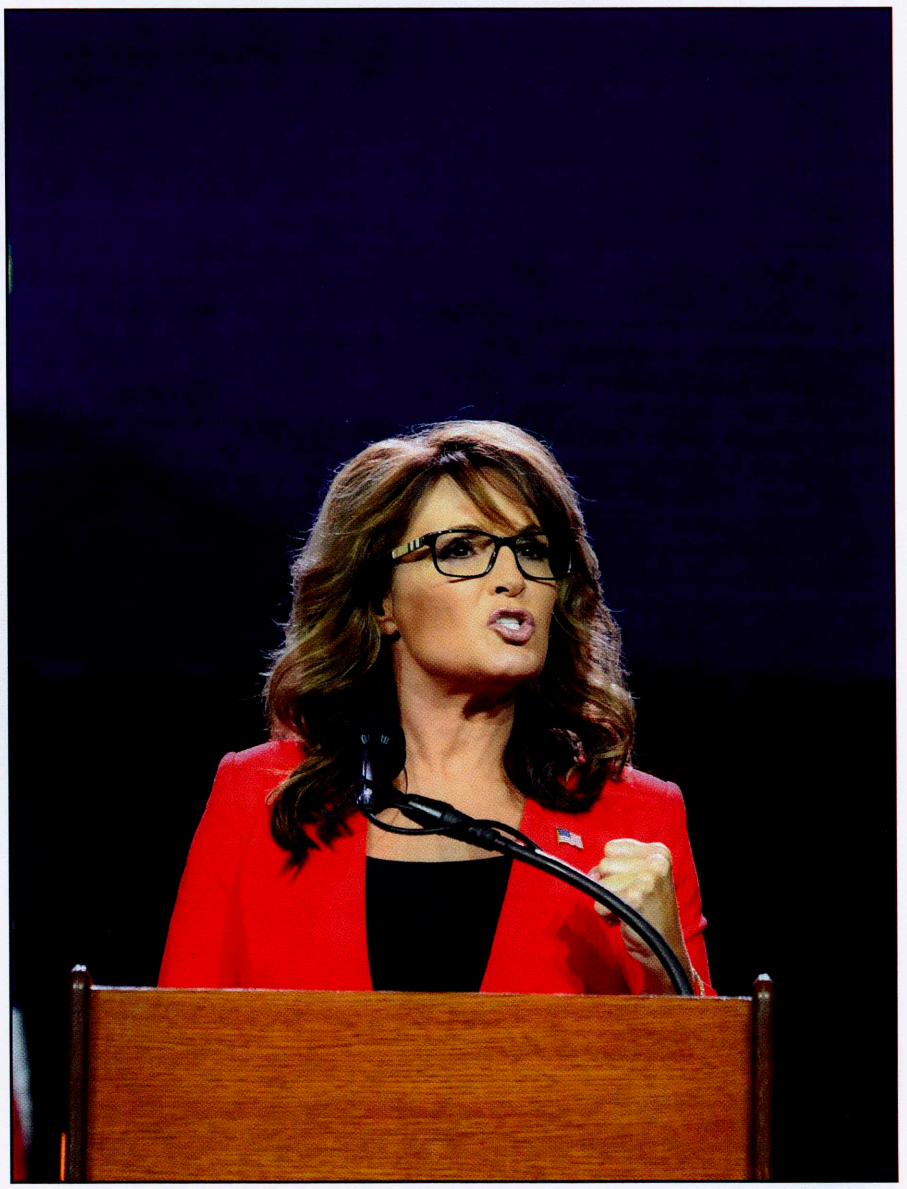


PHOTO COURTESY OF TIME

Sarah Palin, former governor of Alaska and vice prsidential candidate, was instrumental in shaping modern politics.

My Slightly Spring Playlist

By Lily Rizzoli '24
A&E Editor

Lambs Wool
Foster the People
01:20 - 03:30

Pretty Boy
The Neighborhood
01:20 - 03:30

At Least I'm Pretty
Harriette
01:20 - 03:30

Breathe Deeper
Tame Impala
01:20 - 03:30

The Adults Are Talking
The Strokes
01:20 - 03:30

Abandoned Mansion
Dr. Dog
01:20 - 03:30

Come Home to Me
LÉON
01:20 - 03:30

Rollin' Around
Nat & Alex Wolff
01:20 - 03:30

Hair Down (feat. Kendrick Lamar)
SiR, Kendrick Lamar
01:20 - 03:30

Made to Fall in Love
Daniel Caesar
01:20 - 03:30

GRAPHIC BY LILY RIZZOLI '24

April 14, 2022

Review: CAB presents Del Water Gap

by Lily Rizzoli '24
A&E EDITOR

This past Monday, April 11, as the sun set on one of the first warm days this spring, Hamilton's Campus Activities Board (CAB) hosted artist Del Water Gap. The Events Barn was packed to the brim with eager music lovers to see the artist play.

Del Water Gap, also known as Samuel Holden Jaffe, is a 28 year-old musician who is originally from Connecticut but is now based in New York City. Jaffe began his musical career by starting Del Water Gap as a band with two other musicians at his boarding school, naming the band based on the Delaware Water Gap. After high school, the initial band broke up, and Jaffe then attended New York University's Clive Davis Institute of Recorded Music to nurture his passion of songwriting, producing and performing. At this time, he connected with Maggie Rogers, an American singer-songwriter who has a much anticipated album coming out later this summer. She eventually became bandmates with Del Water Gap. After some time, Jaffe relocated to Brooklyn and made the band into an independent project.

Since then, Del Water Gap has become a prominent name in the indie-pop music scene. He especially known for his song "Ode to a Conversation Stuck in Your Throat," which went viral when actresses Margaret Qualley and Kaitlyn Dever had an online dance party to the song during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Del Water Gap's rise to fame added to the allure of his concert on campus, as so many students were familiar with his music. He has just recently released his debut eponymous album, which he performed for the audience acoustically. The event was so popular that both the first and second floor of the Events Barn were filled with viewers. Sara Fischer '25 spoke about this crowd, stating "He was really good, it was a lot of fun especially because so many people came!"

Jaffe was also extremely pleasant and personable. At one point during his set, he asked students to come up and "spill the campus tea" to him, which he would then share with the crowd.

PHOTO COURTESY OF NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

Del Water Gap is going on tour with Girl In Red this April.

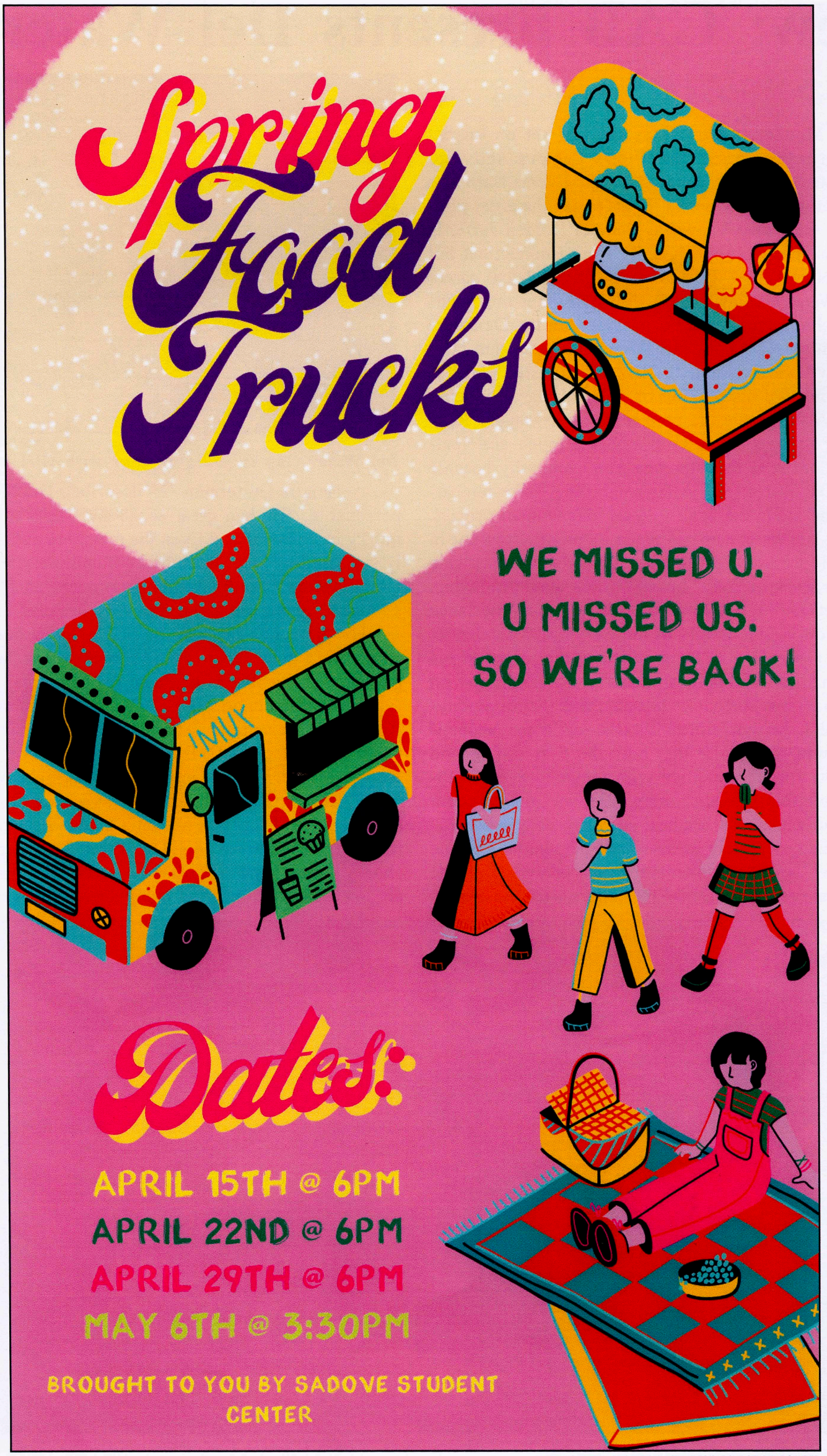
Natalie Gutterman '25 described Del Water Gap as quite personable. "He had great socks and shoes and was funny in a quirky indie boy way." Even the members of CAB were pleasantly surprised by Del Water Gap's friendliness. For example, CAB Social Media Coordinator Celia Dorsey '24 found that "he was so nice after the show, he was very grateful for the opportunity to play the songs the way he originally wrote them. The show itself was a great last acoustic show, he was having fun with the audience and it felt so personal to really hear all of his lyrics."

As previously stated, Del Water Gap's show was the last CAB Acoustic of the semester. The next live performance will be the 2022 Class & Charter (C&C) Day Concert on May 6, 2022, which will feature Aminé, ThatKidJoina, Uptown Booty, Vandigo and Heat.

Del Water Gap was a perfect choice to end the live music of the semester as his show was welcoming, calming and engaging. Hamilton CAB was smart to book Del Water Gap when they did, as he is shortly taking some time off to go on tour in Europe as a supporting act to Girl In Red, playing everywhere from London to Moscow.

PHOTO COURTESY OF TWITTER

The band Del Water Gap previously included American singer-songwriter Maggie Rogers when it was based at New York University.



FLYER COURTESY OF STUDENT ACTIVITIES/SADOVE STUDENT CENTER

April 14, 2022

Thoughts on Tsonga's upcoming retirement

by Owen Lewis '24
SPORTS EDITOR

Jo-Wilfried Tsonga, the 36 year-old Frenchman and former top-five player, has announced his retirement from professional tennis. His final tournament will be at the Parisian tournament Roland-Garros in May, setting him up for a warm sendoff from a home crowd.

Tsonga's career has been a complicated one. He is immensely talented, boasting ample power and athleticism, but he was never the most tactically aware, so there is a sense he has underachieved a little bit. In 2011, Tsonga clashed with Roger Federer in the quarterfinals at Wimbledon. Federer had won Wimbledon six of the last eight years and reeled off the first two sets of the match. Federer had never lost after having a two-set lead at Wimbledon before—or at any major tournament, for that matter. The result of the match looked certain. However, Tsonga decided to catch fire, and stormed through a brilliant comeback, blasting shots past Federer almost at will. It felt shockingly easy as Tsonga won game after game, which is insane to say as he was playing one of the greatest players ever, but such is the skill of Tsonga at his peak.

For every peak, though, there was a valley. At the Australian Open two years later, Tsonga again played Federer in the quarterfinals. He was going toe-to-toe with the great man, winning the second set after losing the first. At a decisive moment in the third set, Tsonga decided to run into his backhand corner to hit a forehand. This was a calculated risk—the forehand is a more powerful shot, so if hit well, running a long way to set up the shot can be worth it. But by moving over to the sideline, the player leaves a massive gap on the other side of the court, so their shot has to be really good to make the risk worth it. It is like a less dramatic version of diving to stay in a point. You are leaving yourself on the ground, so if your diving shot does not win you the point, you are screwed. Tsonga ran all the way outside the sideline to hit a forehand, but he hit the ball softly and to the middle of the court, allowing Federer to easily direct his next shot into the open space. Tsonga was a full 15 feet away from the ball as it flew by him. Juan José Vallejo, a writer liveblogging the match, wrote that Tsonga had hit the dumbest shot he had seen all tournament. Tsonga went on to lose the match. As a result, "Oh, Jo" became a common expression of woe in the tennis universe when Tsonga did something dumb on court.

PHOTO COURTESY OF AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Tsonga celebrates ecstatically en route to the 2008 Australian Open final.

PHOTO COURTESY OF REUTERS

Tsonga waves to the adoring Parisian crowd after losing to Stanislas Wawrinka in the semifinals of the 2015 French Open.

After that loss to Federer, reporters asked Tsonga what he thought the difference was between him and the top four players. He had no idea, and said as much. "Maybe I'm less talented for the moment," he suggested. This quote might sum up Tsonga's biggest weakness as much as anything. Talent was never his problem. He played explosive, crowd-pleasing tennis, often blasting winners past his opponents or diving for desperate returns. He was fast, dynamic, with the capacity to become a human highlight reel. What he could have improved was his tactical awareness and focus, which he may not have understood sufficiently. Tsonga had a tendency to play with bizarre nonchalance in important parts of matches, and sadly, he does not get those moments back.

Tsonga certainly had the skill to win a major title, but he never did. His lone final came way back in 2008. Part of it was Tsonga's less-than-ideal execution, sure, but he also had the misfortune of playing at the same time as Federer, Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic, who vacuumed up the big trophies at an alarming rate. They have 61 major titles between them, and Tsonga was unlucky enough to see the best years of his career coincide with theirs. Tsonga beat them all at various points—his combined record against the three of them is 16 wins and 39 losses—but could rarely do so in the biggest matches. At the French Open in 2012, Tsonga had his foot on Djokovic's neck in the quarterfinals, but he failed to win a match point in four opportunities and went on to lose the match convincingly.

Tsonga started to get riddled with injuries as he entered his 30s. He has not been a factor at the top of the game in some time. There is no shame in the way he is going out—injuries and age are a fate that befall all athletes at some point. Still, there is a sense that he left some things undone. He has had an exceptional career as it is. He won 18 titles in an era when the three best male players ever were all competing.

Yet he could have left a bigger mark, and it is hard to imagine Tsonga himself feels differently. He was good enough to go toe-to-toe with anyone on his best days. He will be missed. Wondering what more Tsonga could have achieved is almost as easy as wishing him well.

Athlete of the Week: Brady Slinger '22

by Sam Dils '22
SPORTS EDITOR

On Sunday, April 10, the men's baseball team swept Amherst in a doubleheader on the road. It was the first time in the team's history that they had swept another team while not playing at home. Brady Slinger '22 was instrumental in the team's success, racking up four hits, including a home run in the first game. *The Spectator* sat down with Slinger to ask him about the doubleheader and the rest of the season.

Amherst had been a tough team to beat over your last few seasons. How did it feel to sweep them this past weekend?

Sweeping Amherst was certainly the highlight of the season so far, maybe even my career here at Hamilton. We have really come together as a unit these past few weeks, so it was rewarding seeing our effort come to fruition. This weekend was a defining moment for Hamilton baseball, as we've never swept a team on the road, ever. It's exciting to make history for Hamilton baseball.

You personally had a monster weekend at the plate with nine hits and six RBIs. What factor do you think was most responsible for the offensive explosion for both you and the team?

Confidence is crucial in baseball. If you know you are better than that opposing pitcher, good things will happen. We had a lot of guys step up in key spots, and everyone seemed to build off of each other at the plate. For me, the baseball looked like a beach ball up there. It was hard not to hit it.

How can the team continue the momentum from the doubleheader? What can you improve upon for the rest of the season?

To keep up the momentum, we need to have that next-guy-up mentality. Against Amherst, we were without our starting shortstop, but the guys played really well. We have to trust that as a team, nothing can faze us. I would not say pitching and hitting can improve much from this past weekend, but hopefully the clutch gene stays with us.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JOSH MCKEE

Slinger '22 earned a season-best four hits in the first game of the doubleheader against Amherst College last weekend.

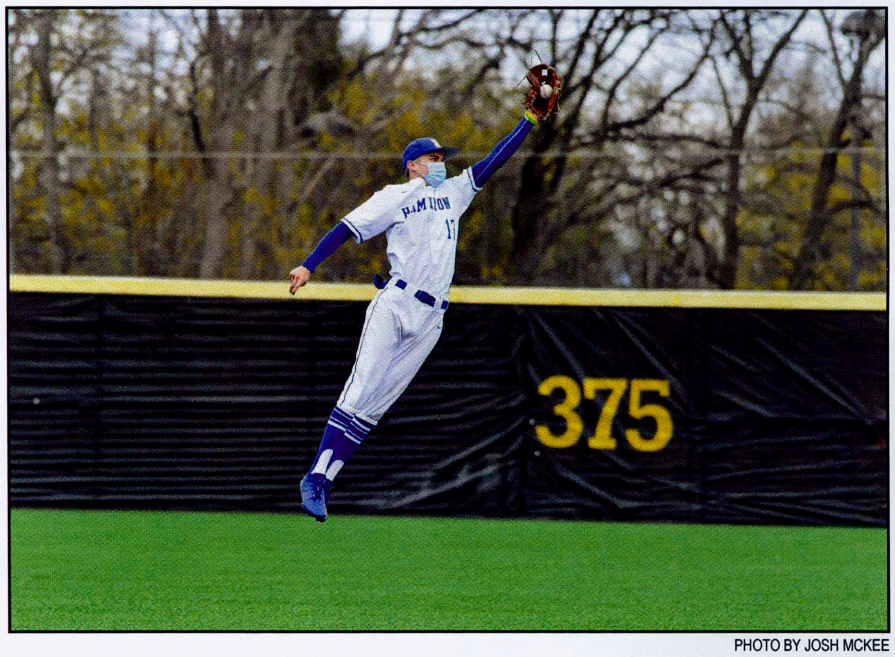


PHOTO BY JOSH MCKEE

Slinger '22 leaps in the air to make a catch in the outfield.

Hamilton is now in first-place in the NESCAC West Division. What does that mean for the team's playoff hopes, and how much are you focusing on the NESCAC standings at the moment?

It feels great to be first in the conference, but there are a lot of games left. This team is not distracted by the standings. We take it one series at a time and expect to succeed. The NESCAC is a tough conference, and right now we are just battling for a playoff spot.

What are your goals for both the massive three-game series against Wesleyan this weekend and the rest of the season?

Of course, the goal this weekend is to take the series against Wesleyan. They are second in the standings, and it would be the next step toward making the playoffs. If we had a rival in conference, it would be Wesleyan; we hate their guts. I'm excited to battle it out, especially at home. Personally, I plan on continuing to barrel baseballs and help this team make a name for ourselves in the NESCAC.

Lightning Round

Best team tradition?

Kissing the egg if you score a run (gotta be there to see it).

Go-to game day meal?
PB&J. Can't stomach Commons on game day.

Do you have any personal superstitions before games?
I never touch the foul line. That would be a crime.

Song/artist on your personal pregame playlist?
Jason Derulo.

Teammate with a secret talent?
Jackson Johns '24 does a mean air guitar.

Favorite athletic memory from Hamilton?
Jay Schlaefer '23's go-ahead home run vs. Wesleyan during the 2021 COVID-19 season.